EXTRACTS

FROM THE

TREATISE OF SYNESIUS

ON

PROVIDENCE.

THIS fable is Egyptian. The Egyptians transcend in wisdom. Perhaps therefore this also being a fable, obscurely signifies something more than a fable, because it is Egyptian. If, however, it is not a fable, but a sacred discourse, it will deserve in a still greater degree to be told, and committed to writing.

Osiris and Typhos were indeed brothers, and procreated from the same seed. There is not, how-

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ever, one and the same relationship of souls and bodies. For it is not congruous to souls to be born on the earth from the same parents, but to flow from one fountain. But the nature of the world imparts two fountains; the one indeed being luminous, but the other obscure and dark. And the one scatters its streams from the earth, as having its roots beneath, and leaps from terrene caverns, in order that it may offer violence to the divine law. But the other is suspended from the back of heaven.[1] And it is sent from thence, indeed, for the purpose of adorning the terrene allotment. In descending, however, it is ordered to be careful, lest in adorning and arranging that which is disorderly and unadorned, it should itself become, by approximating to it, filled with turpitude and deformity. But the law of Themis proclaims to souls, that whatever soul, in associating with the last of things, preserves its own nature free from contamination, shall again by the same way [in which it descended] be restored to the fountain from which it was derived;[2] just as the souls which after a certain manner are impelled from the

[1] i. e. From an intelligible essence.

[2] See my translation of the Phædrus of Plato.

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other fountain, are from a necessity of nature collected into kindred receptacles.

> Where slaughter, rage, and countless ills beside,
> In Ate's meads and darkness, wander wide.[1]

This is the nobility and ignobility of souls. And thus it may happen that a Libyan and Parthian may be allied to each other, and that those whom we call brothers may have no relationship of souls; which appeared by certain indications to be the case with these Egyptian children from their birth, and was clearly manifested when they arrived at the perfection of manhood. For the younger of the two, being born and educated through a divine destiny, was from his infancy desirous of learning, and a lover of fables. For a fable is the wisdom of children. He likewise applied himself to learning with an ardour far beyond what might be expected from his age. He was also obedient to his father, and imbibed with avidity whatever wisdom any one possessed; at first, indeed, with a canine eagerness as it were, desiring to know all things at once, as is usual with those geniuses who raise great expectations of themselves. For these pant

[1] These lines are from Empedocles.

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[after glory], and burst forth before their time, already promising themselves the attainment of the end after which they aspire. In the next place, long before the age of puberty, he was more sedate than a well-educated old man, and modestly attended to what was said to him. But when it was requisite that he himself should speak, or when he was interrogated about what he had heard, or about any thing else, his delay and his blushes were obvious to every one. He also made way for, and resigned his seat to the elder among the Egyptians, though he was the son of one who possessed a mighty empire. He likewise reverenced his equals, and was naturally disposed to pay attention to the welfare of mankind. Hence, while he was still a youth, it was difficult to find an Egyptian who had not through his means received some benefit from his father.

The elder brother Typhos however was, in one word, perverse in every thing. For the king, indeed, had procured for his son Osiris, teachers of all wisdom, both of such as is Egyptian, and such as is foreign. But this Typhos profoundly hated, and ridiculed as only fit for the idle and the servile.

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Perceiving also that his brother conducted himself in an orderly and modest manner towards his companions, he considered this to be occasioned by fear; in consequence of which conduct in his brother, no one ever saw Osiris striking another with his fist, or spurning with his heel, or running in a disorderly manner; and this though his body was light and pure, and an easy burden to the soul which it surrounded. But neither did Osiris ever drink greedily, or laugh immoderately, so as to convulse the whole body, as was daily done by Typhos; and he considered those works alone to be the province of free men to accomplish, which were performed voluntarily and opportunely. Hence, Typhos neither resembled his own race in his natural disposition, nor, in short, any man; and in one word, he did not even himself resemble himself, but he was a certain all-various evil. And now indeed he appeared to be a sluggish and useless burden of the earth, since he only spared as much time from sleep as was sufficient to replenish his belly, and to deposit other things which might serve as the viatica of sleep. But at another time he neglected even a moderate supply of what the necessities of nature required, in order that he

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might leap inelegantly, and be troublesome both to his equals in age, and to those that were older than himself. For he admired bodily strength as the most perfect good, and employed it badly, either in breaking open doors, or hurling large masses of earth. And if he happened to wound any one, or do any other evil, he rejoiced as if it were a testimony of virtue. He was likewise inflated with unseasonable desires, and was most violent in his venereal connexions. Besides this also, he was envious of his brother, and hated the Egyptians, because the people indeed admired Osiris in their discourses and songs, and all of them every where, both at home and in their common sacred ceremonies, supplicated the Gods to bestow upon him every good. Such a character therefore as this was Typhos, and such he appeared to be. Hence, Typhos formed a society of stupid youth, for no other purpose (since he was not naturally adapted to love any one judiciously) than that certain seditious persons might be with him, who were averse to Osiris. But it was easy for any one to gain the good-will of Typhos, and obtain from him such things as youth require, if they only whispered any thing defamatory against Osiris. Such a differ-

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ence, therefore, in the lives of the two, was indicated by their natural dispositions from childhood. But as in paths which are in a different direction, the difference which is at first small, becomes gradually greater, till at length they are distant from each other by the most extended interval, thus also it might be seen in these youths, that the difference between them which was small at first, became very great as they advanced in years. These, however, did not gradually but immediately proceed in contrary paths, the one being allotted perfect virtue, but the other perfect vice. As they increased in years, therefore, the opposition of their deliberate choice also increased, the indications of which became more evident by their deeds.

Osiris, therefore, as soon as he arrived at the age of puberty, associated himself with those who were appointed to the army, as the law did not allow those who were so young as he then was, to bear arms. He ruled likewise over their decisions, being as it were intellect with reference to them, and used the leaders of armies as his hands. Afterwards, his nature increasing like a plant, produced a certain fruit which became continually

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more perfect. But being made a prefect of the spearmen, an auditor of reports, the governor of a city, and the chief of the king's council, he rendered each of these departments much more venerable than they were when he received them. But Typhos being made the treasurer, (for their father thought fit to make trial of the disposition of the youths in smaller affairs) disgraced both himself and him by whom he was appointed to this office, being convicted of stealing the public money, and of bribery and stupidity in his administration. Being transferred, therefore, to a magistracy of another kind, in the hope that he might be adapted to it, he acted in the latter more disgracefully than in the former; and that part of this most excellent kingdom over which Typhos presided, was for a whole year considered inauspicious. From these he passed to other men, and transferred to them also grief and lamentation. Such, therefore, was Typhos in his government of men. And privately, indeed, he employed himself in lascivious dances; and associated with the most disorderly Egyptians and foreigners, who were prepared to speak and hear, to suffer and to do all things, so that his banqueting-room was the workshop of all-various

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intemperance. He likewise snored when he was awake, and was delighted to hear others do the same, conceiving the thing to be a certain admirable music; and he both praised and honoured him who could extend this intemperate sound, and give a greater roundness to it. Among these also, he who was especially strenuous and shameless in all his conduct, and who was not averse to any thing disgraceful, obtained many rewards for his *fortitude*, and besides these, certain magistracies as the wages of his base licentiousness.

Such, therefore, was the domestic conduct of Typhos. But when he transacted the affairs of the public, then he clearly demonstrated that vice is all-various. For it is discordant both with virtue and itself, and all the parts of it are in opposition to each other. In transacting public business, therefore, being inflated with pride, he immediately became furious, and barking more ferociously than an Epirotic dog, inflicted calamity either on an individual, or a family, or a whole city. The greater also the evil was which he occasioned, the more he was delighted, as if he would wipe away with the tears of mankind the infamy of his domestic indo-

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lence. Nevertheless, one advantage was derived from this evil. For frequently when he attempted any thing of a dire nature against some one, he was induced to fall into suspicions foreign from the truth, so that he resembled those who are furious through inspiration from the Nymphs, strenuously contending about the Delphic shadow. In the mean time, he who was in danger was saved; for no mention was made of him afterwards. Or it so happened that he was seized with a lethargy and a heaviness in his head for a certain time, so as to forget what he intended to do. Afterwards, however, though he recovered from this stupor, yet he lost all recollection of past transactions. He would likewise contend with those who were in administration, about the quantity of grains of wheat contained in a medimnus, or the cyathi contained in a congius; exhibiting in such disputes a certain superfluous and absurd sagacity. Sleep, also, by opportunely attacking Typhos, would sometimes snatch a man from destruction. For Typhos, when seized with this, would have dashed his head on the ground, unless some one of his attendants, laying aside his lamp, had supported him. And thus it frequently happened that a tragical *Pan-*

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nuchis [1] ended in a comedy. For he did not transact business during the day, because he was naturally hostile to light and the sun, and adapted to darkness. But though he clearly knew that every one with whom the smallest degree of wisdom was present, despised his extreme ignorance, yet he did not accuse himself of folly, but was on this account the common enemy of intelligent men as of those that injured him, because they knew how to form a judgment of things. For he was a man incapable of giving counsel to others, and most ready in the contrivance of stratagems. With him folly and an insane confidence were inseparably united, which are two pests of the soul that corroborate each other; than which there neither are, nor ever will be in the nature of things, evils of a greater magnitude, or more prompt to destroy the human race.

These several particulars the father saw and understood, but at the same time provided for the welfare of the Egyptians. For he was a king, a priest, and a wise man. And the Egyptian writings say that he was also a God. For the Egyptians

[1] Any sacrifice or mystery which was celebrated during the whole of the night, was thus denominated.

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do not hesitate to believe that myriads of Gods [1] have reigned over them, before the earth was governed by men, and they trace the descent of their kings from Piromis to Piromis.[2] When therefore

[1] Every God, according to the arcana of ancient theology, beginning from on high, produces his proper series as far as to the last of things; and this series comprehends many essences different from each other, such as Angelical, Dæmoniacal, Heroical, Nymphical, and the like. The lowest powers also of these orders, have a great communion and physical sympathy with the human race, and contribute to the perfection of all their natural operations, and particularly to their procreations. Such men, therefore, as transcended the herd of mankind either in practical or intellectual virtue, in consequence of being inspired by and also knowing the divinity from whom they descended, called themselves by the name of that divinity, and were in consequence of this denominated Gods. For a copious account of these heroic souls, see the notes to my Pausanias, and to the Cratylus of Plato in the last volume of my translation of his works.

[2] "When Hecatæus," (says Herodotus in Euterp.) "in the account of his family, came to mention the 16th God, they (i. e. the priests of Jupiter at Thebes) would by no means admit of his supposition, that a man could be begotten by a God; but on the contrary told him, that each of the images he saw, represented a Piromois begotten by another Piromois; and that of the whole number, amounting to 345, no one had been reputed either a God or a hero; the word Piromois signifying no more in their language than an honest and virtuous man, which character all those represented by the images had, and yet were far inferior to the Gods."—Littlebury's Herodotus, vol. i. p. 221.

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the divine laws had transferred him to the greater Gods, and the day *destined* [for the election of his successor] was present, the tribes of the priests, and the soldiers that were natives of the land, assembled together from every city of Egypt, having been previously cited by a proclamation for this purpose. These, therefore, assembled from the necessity of law. It was lawful, however, for the rest of the people to be absent; but no one was prevented from being present, who intended to come as a spectator of voting, and not as one who was to give his vote. Swineherds, however, were excluded from the spectacle, and such foreigners as bore arms for the Egyptians: for it was not lawful for these to be present. The elder son, therefore, on this account had much fewer votes than the younger. For the seditious faction of Typhos consisted of swineherds and foreigners, an insane and numerous class of men; yet yielding to custom, and not attempting any thing contrary to it, nor considering the disgrace of their exclusion as something dire, but as that which was appropriate, as being established by law, and natural to their race.

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A king, however, among the Egyptians was created as follows: There is a sacred mountain near the great city of Thebes, and another mountain opposite to it, between both of which is the stream of the Nile. Of these, the mountain opposite to that which is sacred, is called Libycus, in which the candidates for the election of the king were by law commanded to dwell, during the time of preparation for the ceremony, in order that they might not know any thing of the choice which would be made. But the sacred mountain is called Egyptius. On the summit of this is the tabernacle of the king, with whom also those priests dwell who transcend in wisdom, and the arrangement proceeds to every class of those of superior endowments, distributing the seats according to the dignity of the mysteries [in which those who filled them were initiated.] The first circle, therefore, consists of those, who are placed about the king as if surrounding a heart. The next circle to this consists of the soldiers. And they, indeed, surround the hill which forms another mountain on the extended mount, like a rising breast, and enables those to see the king who are at the greatest distance from him. But those surround the foot of the mountain who

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are permitted to be present at the spectacle. And these only celebrate with propitious acclamations that part of the ceremony which they behold. Those, however, who have the power of voting, when the king invokes the Gods, and those to whom this office belongs, excite the whole assembly (as if divinity was present, and paid attention to the election), and the name of one of the candidates for the kingdom being announced, the soldiers elevate their hands. But the *comastæ*, (or those that furnish banquets) the ædiles and prophets, give their votes, these being, indeed, less numerous, but possessing the greatest power in the election. For the vote of a prophet is equal to a hundred hands; that of one of the comastæ to twenty; and that of an ædile to ten hands. Another name of the royal candidates being announced, hands are elevated and votes given. And if the number of the votes happens to be nearly equal, then the king by adding his vote to the part which exceeds causes it to be much greater than it was; but if he adds it to the less part, he renders it equal to the other part. In this case it is necessary to dissolve the assembly of voters, and pray to the Gods, supplicating them for a long time; and sanctifying themselves in a

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more irreprehensible manner, till the Gods indicate the king, not through veils, or usual signs, but openly, and the people with their own ears become witnesses of the choice of the Gods. Such was the usual mode of election, the choice sometimes falling on one, and sometimes on another person. But in the election of Osiris and Typhos, the Gods without the performance of any sacred ceremonies by the priests, became at first immediately visible, and themselves presiding conducted the affair. Each of them also appointed their priests, and it was obvious to every one on what account they were present; though if they had not been present, every hand and every vote would have expected the name of the younger of the royal youths. With us, however, great things are pre-indicated to greater and wiser[1] men, and divinity signifies they will happen whether they are for the better or the worse, by portents of an admirable nature.

Osiris, therefore, as it was lawful for him to do, remained in that place into which he was at first brought. But Typhos, being impatient of delay,

[1] For φροιμιοις here, it is necessary to read φρονιμοις.

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was restless and disturbed, and anxious to know the state of the election; and at length could not refrain from attempting to corrupt the suffrages. Not sparing, therefore, either himself, or the royal laws, and plunging into the river, in which he was borne along, swimming, and doing and suffering every thing, and derided by those who saw him, he at length passed over the stream; fancying that he was not seen except by those to whom he came, and to whom he had promised a pecuniary reward. He was, however, recognized by every one, and every one hated both him and his design. Yet no one thought fit to reprove an insane disposition. Hence it happened to this most miserable man, that while he was himself present, and in his own hearing, he was rejected by the decision of every one, and all hands were against him. The Gods also execrated him. But Osiris being sent for came, not at all solicitous about the event, the Gods, the priests, and in short, the whole assembly, meeting him with sacred crowns, and sacred pipes, on the bank of the river in which the ship destined to receive the new king from the Libyc coast, ought to sail. Mighty signs likewise were immediately exhibited from the heavens, accompanied with

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divine voices indicative of good, and every kind of prodigy from which a judgment of futurity is formed both in great and small affairs,—all which portended a prosperous empire to the Egyptians. Hence dæmons of the worse part [i. e. evil dæmons] could not endure to remain quiet, nor to bear with mildness this felicity of men, but thought fit to attack it, and became tumid [with rage]; in consequence of which something of dæmoniacal stratagem was portended. After Osiris, therefore, was initiated by his father in the royal mysteries, [the Gods] clearly announced to him, as perspicuously knowing every thing, both a certain abundance of good, and that it would be requisite to exterminate his brother, who was born with a destiny unpropitious both to the Egyptians, and to the house of his father, if he did not intend to confound all things, in order that his brother might neither see nor hear of the prosperity and fertility of Egypt, during the reign of Osiris. For no good could be borne by the nature of Typhos. The Gods also unfolded to Osiris the twofold essence of souls, and the necessary opposition existing between terrene and supernal souls. In consequence of this, they thought it requisite that he should subvert and cut

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off the nature which was hostile to the beneficent and divine co-ordination of things,[1] not being at all prevented from so doing through what is called alliance by mankind. They likewise informed him what calamities would happen to himself, to the Egyptians, to the neighbouring kingdoms, and to those in subjection to the Egyptians, if he was negligent in this respect. For they said that neither would the evil be debile which would befal him, nor would a casual circumspection be sufficient to exclude and weaken both the obvious and latent attacks of Typhos. For, they added, that a strong tribe of envious and malignant dæmons were present with Typhos as his patrons, to whom also he was allied, and by whom he was hurled forth into light, in order that they might employ him as an

[1] The twofold co-ordination of things according to the Pythagoreans, or the opposition which every where prevails in the universe, and also the fertile and barren periods which alternately take place in the sublunary region, appear to be indicated by this Egyptian fable. But this opposition in the Gods, is that of bound and infinity; in intellects, it is that of sameness and difference; in souls, that of the circle of sameness, and the circle of difference; but in bodies, it is that of heaven and generation. And universally the division is into that which adorns, and that which is adorned, that which fills, and that which is filled. For an account of the fertile and barren periods, see the additional notes.

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instrument of the evil which they inflict on mankind. And that proceeding in this path, they had procreated, nourished, and performed the office of a midwife to Typhos, and educated him in an appropriate manner, that he might eventually be of great advantage to them. Nevertheless they thought that one thing was yet wanting to the accomplishment of all his wishes, viz. that he should be environed with the strength of empire. For thus he would be completely perfect, being both willing and able to perpetrate mighty evils. But you (said some one of the Gods) they hate, as the gain of mankind, but their detriment. *For the calamities of nations are the banquets of evil dæmons.* Again, therefore, and again the Gods admonished Osiris that he should expel his brother, and send him to some distant land, as they both knew and saw that Osiris was naturally mild, in consequence of which they were at length forced to tell him that for a certain time he would endure [the depravity of his brother], but that at length Typhos would latently betray both him and all men, and in reality exchange the benignant name of brotherly-love for the greatest of calamities. Osiris, however, said, in answer to this, " While you are propitious and

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afford assistance, I shall not fear my brother, though he should remain, and I shall be safe from the indignation of [evil] dæmons. For you being willing, can easily procure a remedy for what may have been overseen by me."

But the father of Osiris said in reply, "You do not conceive rightly in this affair, my son. For that portion of the divine nature which is in the world is conversant with mundane affairs, yet for the most part it energizes according to its first power, and is filled with intelligible beauty. For there [i. e. in the intelligible world] there is another supermundane genus of Gods, which connectedly contains all beings as far as to the last of things. But this genus of Gods is immoveable, and has no tendency whatever to matter. It is also a blessed spectacle to those beings who are Gods by nature [or the mundane Gods]. And to behold the fountain of it, is a still more blessed vision. This genus likewise because it abides with itself is exuberantly full of good, being exuberantly full of itself. But the good of these Gods consists in a conversion to the God who reigns in the intelligible world. Nevertheless the energy of good is not simple, nor of one

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form. But these divinities direct their attention to the parts of the world, deducing as much as possible the energy which consists in contemplation to the subject of their government. That which is pure and entire, therefore, in these, is immediately arranged under that first essence. But they arrange the natures proximate to themselves, and a succession of orders descends in a continued series, as far as to the last of beings. All things likewise enjoy the providential care of first natures through those of a middle rank, yet not equally. For if this were the case, that which is successive would have no subsistence; but beings in descending would be debilitated, till by confounding and adulterating their order, things would cease to exist. A thing of this kind also takes place in these inferior abodes. The essence of that which is in generation being naturally erratic, is allotted the extremity of a corporeal destiny, and the most obnoxious to corruption. But to the heavens the first and an undecaying condition of being is distributed, and a form analogous to that of soul. Hence, what they are, said he, (pointing out the Gods) in the hea-

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vens, that dæmons are in the incessantly mutable[1] elements. For they are naturally full of stupid astonishment and audacity, and in consequence of being separated by so great an interval from the heavens, have no perception of the elegant arrangement of divine natures. Since, therefore, the dregs of beings is not sufficient to its own preservation; for it is in a flowing condition, and does not stop for existence, but imitates it by becoming to be; and since dæmons as being allied to this nature, have a destructive essence; hence it is necessary that divinity should direct his attention to these lower regions and impart certain principles, which the sublunary world follows for a time in a becoming manner, viz. for as long a time as that which is imparted is sufficient. But as instruments which are drawn by strings are moved indeed, even when the principle which imparted motion to the machine ceases to act, yet are not moved ad infinitum; for they have not inwardly the fountain of motion; but are moved as long as the power imparted to them prevails, and is not by being separated from its proper origin, dissolved in its progression; after the same

[1] For πολυκλονητοις here, I read πολυκινητοις.

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manner my dear Osiris conceive that it is well for a divine nature to exist, and at the same time not exist in this terrestrial abode,[1] but to be sent into it from another region. On this account, souls are rarely good in these realms, though they may be seen in them. And the Gods who are the inspective guardians of generation when they direct their attention to it, perform indeed that which is appropriate to them, yet not according to their primary life; for their blessedness consists in something different from this, because it is more blessed primarily to enjoy the participations of beauty and order from that which is first, than to adorn things of an inferior nature. For the latter is a turning away from, but the former a conversion to [primary good.] *You also have been initiated in those mysteries in which there are two pair of eyes, and it is requisite that the pair which are beneath should be closed when the pair that are above them perceive, and that when the pair above are closed, those which are beneath should be opened.* Think, therefore, that this is an enigma indicative of contemplation and action, the intermediate natures

[1] i. e. A divine nature is not present locally in the earth, but is present by its energies and illuminations.

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alternately energizing according to each of these; but so as to energize more perfectly in the better of these, and to associate with the inferior from necessity alone. Hence these are the works of the Gods, effecting, indeed, things necessary to the world, yet not imparting precedaneous goods, because men also at one time apply themselves to the management of domestic[1] concerns, in a greater and less degree; but at another time philosophize, and in this latter energy are more divine than in the former. From these things, therefore, understand what I say. Do not request the Gods to be your associates, since their precedaneous employment consists in contemplation and the government of the first parts of the world. They also dwell in the heavens, and are at a great distance from the earth. Yet you must not think that they are without employment, or that their descent hither is perpetual. For they descend according to orderly periods of time,[2] for the purpose of imparting the

[1] Instead of *οικουρουσι* in this place, I read *οικονομουσι*.

[2] By the descent of the Gods to the earth, nothing more is meant than the aptitude of terrestrial natures to receive their illuminations. For the Gods always contemplate, and always energize providentially, but earthly natures are not always adapted to receive their beneficent energies in a becoming manner.

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principle of a beneficent motion in the republics of mankind, after the example of the framers of machines. But this happens when they harmonize a kingdom, and send hither for this purpose souls allied to themselves. For this providence is divine and most ample, which frequently through one man pays attention to a countless multitude of men. These, therefore, in providentially inspecting human affairs must also necessarily at the same time be attentive to their own. It is requisite, however, that you who are engaged in foreign concerns, should remember whence you are derived, and that you engage in this superintendance of the affairs of others, as in a certain servitude to the world. But you should endeavour to elevate yourself, and not to draw down the Gods. You should likewise pay every possible attention to yourself, as if living in a camp among foreigners, and as a divine soul among [evil] dæmons, whom it is reasonable to suppose, as they are earth-begotten, will be hostile to and indignant with any one who within their boundaries observes laws that belong to another tribe of beings. You must be satisfied, therefore, in being vigilant both by night and by day, and in making this the only object of your care, that you

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being but one may not be vanquished by many, a stranger by natives. For there is indeed in this terrestrial abode, the sacred tribe of heroes who pay attention to mankind, and who are able to give them assistance, even in the smallest concerns, and there is also a more ancient good.[1] This heroic tribe is as it were a colony, established here, in order that this terrene abode may not be left destitute of a better nature. These heroes also extend their hands in those things in which they are able to give assistance. But when Matter excites her own proper blossoms, (i. e. progeny) to war against the soul, the resistance made by the heroic tribe is but small when the Gods are absent. For every thing is strong in its appropriate place.

These dæmons, however, who are the progeny

[1] i. e. The good arising from the super-mundane providential inspection of divinity. Hence Plato in the 9th book of his Republic most divinely says, "Whatever comes from the Gods to the man who is beloved by the Gods, will all be the best possible, unless he has some necessary ill from former miscarriage. Hence, if the just man happens to be in poverty or disease, or in any other of those seeming evils, these things issue to him in something good either whilst alive or dead. *For never at any time is he neglected by the Gods who inclines earnestly to endeavour to become just, and practises virtue as far as it is possible for man to resemble God.*"

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of matter wish to make souls their own, and the manner in which they attack them is as follows: It is not possible in the earth that there should be some one who has not a portion of the irrational soul. And this, indeed, the multitude hurl forth as their defence, but the wise man suspends from his essence. All souls, however, necessarily have this part. Evil dæmons through this, as through that which is allied to them, invade and betray the animal. For in reality that which then takes place resembles a siege. But as coals are swiftly enkindled by torches, through their adaptation to fire, so the nature of these dæmons being passive, or rather being a living and moveable passion, when it approaches to the soul, excites the passion which is in it, and produces it from capacity into energy. For each thing operates by juxtaposition. But every thing which suffers is co-assimilated to that which acts upon it. Thus dæmons inflame desire, thus they inflame anger, and all such evils as are the sisters of these; associating with souls through the parts that are adapted to themselves, which naturally perceive the presence of these dæmons, and are excited and corroborated by them, rising against intellect, till they either vanquish the

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whole soul, or despair of its caption. This then is the greatest of contests. For there is neither any time, nor any mode, nor any place, in which they cease to attack, and thence invade the soul from whence no one would expect an assault. Their snares are every where, their machines every where, and on all sides they excite an intestine war, till they either vanquish or abandon the attempt.[1] But the Gods from on high are spectators of these beautiful contests, in which you will be crowned, as I also wish you may in those of the second rank. I am, however, afraid, that though

[1] Proclus, in his very elegant hymn to the Sun, alludes to these dæmons and their attacks, in the following lines:

δειμαινουσι δε σειο θοης μαστιγος απειλην
δαιμονες, ανθρωπων δηλημονες, αγριοθυμοι,
ψυχαις ημετεραις δυεραις κακα πορσυνοντες,
οφρ' αιει κατα λαιτμα βαρυσμαραγου βιοτοιο
σωματος οτλευωσιν υπο ζευγοδεσμα ποθουντες,
υψιτενους δε λαθοιντο πατρος πολυφεγγεος αυλης.

" Ferocious dæmons, noxious to mankind,
Dread the dire anger of thy rapid scourge;
Dæmons who machinate a thousand ills
Pregnant with ruin to our wretched souls,
That, merg'd beneath life's dreadful-sounding sea,
In body's chains they willingly may toil,
Nor e'er remember in the dark abyss
The splendid palace of their sire sublime."

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you will vanquish in the former, you will be vanquished in the latter contests. For when the divine part of the soul does not follow the inferior part, but frequently restrains it, and is converted to itself, then in process of time it becomes so corroborated as to sustain all attacks, and so resplendent as it were, that it no longer receives the influxes of dæmons. Thus, therefore, the whole animal then becomes truly divine and one. And this is a celestial plant in the earth, which does not receive a foreign ingraftment, so as to produce fruits from it, but changes that which is foreign into its own nature. Evil dæmons, therefore, despairing of obtaining the victory over it, then entirely contend in the second contest, which consists in endeavouring to extirpate this plant from the earth, and destroy it, as in no respect adapted to themselves. For they are ashamed of being vanquished, if some one of a nature foreign to themselves subdues them, and is resident in the places which belong to them; this being in reality, and appearing to be a trophy of victory. For a man of this kind is not only a detriment to them in himself, but causes others also to revolt from their dominion. For when virtue is the object of emulation, vice must necessarily perish.

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On this account, therefore, these dæmons endeavour by stratagems to destroy every one, whether he be a private person or a potentate, who refuses obedience to the laws of matter. As you, however, are a king, it will be easier for you than for a private person to guard against their attacks. For they assault externally, if they do not make any progress in their internal attempts, by war, sedition, and by such things as injure the body, by which, however, that king will not be in the least subdued who pays attention to himself. For that is not to be conquered in which strength and wisdom are conjoined. But when these are separated from each other, strength being without skill, and wisdom being imbecile, they are easily subdued.

The conception, indeed, my son, of your forefathers in the formation of sacred images, is perfectly admirable. For the Egyptians make a twofold representation of the dæmon Hermes, placing a young by the side of an elderly man, intending to signify by this, that he who rightly inspects [sacred concerns] ought to be both intelligent and strong, one of these being imperfect in affording utility without the other. On this account, also, a sphinx

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is established by us in the vestibules of our temples, as a sacred symbol of the conjunction of these two goods; the beast in this figure signifying strength, but the man wisdom.[1] For strength when desti-

[1] The following explanation of the sphinx is extracted from the notes to my translation of Pausanias: The sphinx, according to Lasus Hermioneus, was the daughter of Echidna and Typhon; and according to Clearchus, she had the head and hands of a virgin, the body of a dog, a human voice, the tail of a dragon, the claws of a lion, and the wings of a bird. But it appears to me that the ancients, by the sphinx, designed to represent to us the nature of the phantasy or imagination. In order to be convinced of which, it is necessary to observe, that the rational soul, or the true man, consists of intellect, dianoia or the discursive energy of reason, and opinion; but the fictitious man, or the irrational soul, commences from the phantasy, under which desire and anger subsist. Hence the basis of the rational life is *opinion*, but the summit of the irrational life is the phantasy. But the phantasy, as Iamblichus beautifully observes, grows upon, as it were, and fashions all the powers of the soul; exciting in opinion the illuminations from the senses, and fixing in that life which is extended with body, the impressions which descend from intellect. Hence, says Proclus, it folds itself about the indivisibility of true intellect, conforms itself to all formless species, and becomes perfectly every thing, from which dianoia and our indivisible reason consist.

This being the case, as the phantasy is all things passively which intellect is impassively (on which account Aristotle calls the phantasy passive intellect) hence the head of the sphinx is human, but at the same time of the feminine sex; this sex being the image, from its passivity, of the irrational life. By the sphinx having the body of a dog, the discriminating power

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tute of the ruling aid of wisdom, is borne along with stupid astonishment, mingling and confound-

of the phantasy is implied: for a dog is the image of the discriminating power of the soul. Hence Hercules drew up this power from Hades, viz. from the obscurity of a sensible life. But by her having the tail of a dragon, and the claws of a lion, the communication of the phantasy with desire and anger is signified. And her wings are images of the elevating powers, which the phantasy naturally possesses; for it is re-elevated in conjunction with the returning soul, to the region every way resplendent with divine light. But the riddles of the sphinx are images of the obscure and intricate nature of the phantasy. He, therefore, who is unable to solve the riddles of the sphinx, i. e. who cannot comprehend the dark and perplexed nature of the phantasy, will be drawn into her embraces and torn in pieces, viz. the phantasy in such a one will subject to its power the rational life, cause its indivisible energies to become divisible, and thus destroy as much as possible its very essence. But he who, like Œdipus, is able to solve the enigmas of the sphinx, or, in other words, to comprehend the dark essence of his phantasy, will, by illuminating its obscurity with the light of intellect, cause it, by becoming lucid throughout, to be no longer what it was before.

Hence we may see the propriety of the Egyptians placing a sphinx in the *vestibule* of the temple of Isis,[1] who is the same with Minerva. For what the phantasy is in the microcosm man, that æther is in the universe. But opinion may be called the vestibule of the rational soul, and the rational soul is as it were the temple of that intellectual illumination which proceeds from Minerva. In this vestibule, therefore, the phantasy is seated. And in a similar manner æther is seated in the vestibule of that divine soul, which is suspended from the deity of Minerva, and which may be called her temple. So that æther is the sphinx of the universe.

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ing all things; and intellect is useless for the purposes of action, when it is deprived of the subserviency of hands. But virtue and fortune are scarcely indeed found to unite, and when they do, it is in great characters such as yourself in whom they concur. No longer, therefore, molest the Gods, since you are able, if willing, to be saved by your own internal resources. For it is not fit that the Gods should always be absent from their own abodes, and be willingly conversant with foreign and inferior places; unless it is impious in us to use in a becoming manner the auxiliaries which are disseminated in us for the purpose of preserving terrene natures in order and a continued succession. For those who assert this, must admit that the Gods again descend from necessity before the appointed time, to the providential inspection of terrene affairs. But when the harmony is dissolved and becomes old, which the Gods adapted to things, they again descend [1] hither that they

[1] When certain places and parts of the earth lose the aptitude which they once possessed of receiving divine illuminations, then they are said in fables to be deserted by the Gods; and when they recover this aptitude, and thus partake of the illuminations of the Gods, then the Gods are said to descend to such places, and this recovery of the participation of divine

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may call it forth into energy, and resuscitate it when it is as it were expiring. They likewise are delighted to effect this, accomplishing in so doing a certain subserviency to the nature of the world. They also descend when this harmony is corrupted and broken through the fault of the natures that receive it, when in no other way whatever it is possible for these terrene affairs to be preserved. Divinity, therefore, is not excited by circumstances of a trifling nature, nor when an error is committed about this or that particular; for it is necessary that the affair should be something of great moment, for the sake of which some one of the blessed descends to this abode. When, however, the whole order of things, and the greatest things are corrupted, then it is necessary that the Gods should descend for the purpose of imparting the principle of another orderly distribution of things. By no means, therefore, should men be indignant, since the evils which happen to them are spontaneous, nor ought they to accuse the

influence is fabulously called the birth-day of those Gods by whom this influence is imparted. The recovery of this aptitude, also, is owing to the providential energies of the Gods, and is as it were a subordinate and preparatory illumination, the precursor of one that is precedaneous.

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Gods of not providentially attending to their affairs. For providence requires that men should exert what they derive from themselves. Nor is it wonderful that there should be evils in the abode of evils; but it is admirable if there is any thing here which is not of this kind. For such a thing is a stranger and foreign. This also is from providence, through which, if we are not negligent, but employ what we possess from it, it is possible for us to be perfectly happy. For providence is not like the mother of an infant recently born, who must necessarily be occupied in repelling whatever may accede of a painful nature, since the child is yet imperfect, and incapable of assisting himself. But providence resembles that mother, who having caused her child to grow, and furnished him with arms, orders him to use them, and repel the evils by which he may be attacked. Philosophize therefore always about these things, and consider the knowledge of them as a thing of the greatest importance to mankind. For men who are pious and at the same time solicitous, admit that there is a providence, and pay attention to themselves, and do not conceive that the conversion of divinity [to the superintendance of mundane affairs] and the use of virtue are dis-

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cordant with each other. Farewell. But prevent if you are wise the designs of your brother, and be the first to subvert your own fate and that of the Egyptians. For this is possible. But if you yield and are remiss, expect at a late period the assistance of the Gods.

Having thus said, he departed the same way with the Gods. But Osiris was left on the earth, (though he was a thing of which the earth was by no means worthy), and immediately strove to exterminate evils from it, not employing any force for this purpose, but sacrificing to Persuasion, to the Muses and Graces, he rendered all men voluntarily obedient to the laws. But as the Gods abundantly supplied the king with all such gifts as the air, the water, and the earth afford, he yielded the enjoyment of these to the multitude, but abandoned himself all indulgence, and instead of it engaged in every kind of labour, slept but little, was full of care, and in short, was without leisure, in order that all his subjects might have leisure. Hence, he filled all men with both internal and external goods, not only individuals, but families and their kindred, cities, and whole provinces. For he ex-

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cited virtuous emulation, ordering that every discipline and every pursuit should be undertaken with a view to this one thing. He likewise appointed rewards for those who governed men in the best manner, and who made the governed to resemble their governors. But it is necessary that every thing which is honoured should increase. At the same time, therefore, the love of all erudition was augmented, both that which pertains to the mind, and that which depends on the tongue. For those who excelled in a thing of this latter kind, were no longer to be seen among the vulgar herd, but were splendid through the honours which they received from the king, in consequence of imparting the art which is subservient to wisdom; because intellect proceeds into light clothed with words, and is either well or badly adorned, just as some men are seen to be of an elegant shape, but others deformed. Osiris therefore thought it fit, that preparatory disciplines should be honoured; for he conceived erudition to be the fountain of virtue. Piety, likewise, then flourished among the Egyptians more than at any other time. And these indeed were the goods of the soul, in which the Egyptians abounded during the reign of Osiris, so

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that the whole region then resembled a school of virtue, youth looking to one leader only, performing that one thing which they saw, and speaking that one thing which they heard.

With respect to wealth, also, Osiris himself indeed neglected it, but was anxious in the extreme that others might obtain it, himself refusing all gifts, but being most munificent to others. He likewise liberated cities from the payment of tribute, supplied them [from his own treasury] when they were in want, raised that which was fallen, and applied a remedy to that which was in a ruinous condition. And one city, indeed, he rendered more ample, but another he beautified; this he built, and that which was deserted by its inhabitants he repeopled. It is necessary, therefore, that an individual should be a partaker of common goods; but Osiris did not desist from paying attention to this or that man, and from endeavouring that while he reigned no one might be seen lamenting and weeping. Nor was Osiris ignorant of the wants of any one, or of what prevented any one from being blessed. Hence, one man requested Osiris to confer on him the honor which was justly his

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due, and it was accordingly conferred on him; but another who applied himself to books, and had not sufficient leisure to procure the necessaries of life, was supplied by Osiris with food in the Prytanæum. Another who neglected human honours, and who was sufficiently affluent, but perhaps was ashamed of his subserviency to the public, did not escape the notice of Osiris, who liberated him from his employment, not being importuned by him for this purpose, but preventing his solicitation, conceiving through his reverence for wisdom, that such a one should be a law to himself, and should be free, as a sacred thing dedicated to divinity. In short, no one was defrauded of his desert, unless he deserved some evil; for in this case, he did not reward him. For Osiris was ambitious to vanquish the most impudent men, by gentleness of manners and beneficent works. And through these means he thought he should be able to subdue his brother and his faction, by changing their natural disposition through the abundance of virtue; in which opinion however he was deceived. For *envy is not repressed by virtue, but is in a greater degree inflamed by it. For if it naturally adheres to good,*

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the greater the good is, the more the pain of envy is increased.

Some time after this, Typhos obtained the kingdom by fraud and force, and Osiris was banished. But during the evils arising from the tyrannical government of Typhos, some God manifestly appeared to a certain philosopher, who was a stranger in Egypt, and who had received great benefits from Osiris, and ordered him to endure the present calamities, because they were months only and not years in which the fates had destined that the Egyptian sceptres should raise the nails of the wild beasts,[1] and depress the heads of the sacred birds.[2] But this is an arcane symbol. And the philosophic stranger above-mentioned, knew that a representation of this was engraved in obelisks, and in the sacred recesses of the temples. The divinity also unfolded to him the meaning of the sacred sculp-

[1] i. e. Material dæmons, or θηρες χθονος, *the wild beasts of the earth,* as they are called in the Chaldean Oracles.

[2] i. e. The whole choir of beneficent natures superior to man. But by the depression of the heads of the sacred birds, the inaptitude of persons and places to receive divine influence, is denoted.

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ture, and gave him a sign of the time in which it would be verified. *For when those, said he, who are now in power, shall endeavour to make an innovation in our religion, then in a short time after expect that the* GIANTS, *meaning by these, men of another nation, shall be entirely expelled, being agitated by their own avenging furies.* If, however, some remains of the sedition should still exist, and the whole should not be at once extinguished, but Typhos should still remain in the seat of government, nevertheless do not despair of the Gods. The following, also, is another symbol for you. *When we shall purify the air which surrounds the earth, and which is defiled with the breath of the impious, with fire and water, then the punishment of the rest will also follow, and then immediately expect a better order of things, Typhos being removed. For we expel such like prodigies by the devastation of fire and thunder.* In consequence of this, the stranger considered that to be a felicitous circumstance which had before appeared to him to be dreadful, and no longer bore with molestation a necessary continuance in life, through which he would be an eye-witness of the advent of the Gods. For it exceeded the power of human

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sagacity to conjecture, that so powerful a multitude as were then collected together in arms, and who even in time of peace were by law obliged to be armed, should be vanquished without any opposition. He considered with himself, therefore, how these things could be accomplished; for they appeared to surpass the power of reason. *But after no great length of time, a certain depraved fragment of religion, and an adulteration of divine worship, like that of money as it were, prevailed, which the ancient law exterminated from cities, shutting the doors against impiety, and expelling it to a great distance from the walls.*[1] Typhos,

[1] What is here said by Synesius, reminds me of the following extraordinary prophecy in the Asclepian dialogue, ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus, a Latin translation only of which is extant, and is generally believed by the learned to have been made by Apuleius. The passage I allude to is the following:

"An ignoras, O Asclepi, quod Ægyptus imago sit cœli, aut, quod est verius, translatio, et descensio omnium, quæ gubernantur, atque exercentur in cœlo? Et si dicendum est verius, terra nostra totius mundi est templum: et tamen quoniam præscire cuncta prudentes decet, istud vos ignorare fas non est, futurum tempus est, quum appareat Ægyptios incassum pia mente divinitatem et sedula religione servasse, et omnis eorum sancta veneratio in irritum casura frustrabitur. E terris enim ad cœlum est recursura divinitas. *Linquetur Ægyptus, terraque, quæ fuit divinitatis sedes, religione viduata, numinum præsentia destituetur. Alienigenis enim regionem istam, ter-*

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however, did not himself introduce this impiety, for he feared the Egyptian multitude, but for this

ramque complentibus, non solum neglectus religionum, sed (quod est durius) quasi de legibus, a religione, pietate, cultuque divino statuetur præscripta pœna, prohibitio. Tunc terra ista, sanctissima sedes delubrorum et templorum, sepulchrorum erit mortuorumque plenissima. O Ægypte, Ægypte, religionum solæ supererunt fabulæ, eæque incredibiles posteris suis, solaque supererunt verba lapidibus incisa, tua pia facta narrantibus, *et inhabitabit Ægyptum Scythes aut Indus, aut aliquis talis.* Divinitas enim repetet cœlum, deserti homines toti morientur, atque ita Ægyptus Deo et homine viduata deseretur. Te verò appello sanctissimum flumen, tibique futura prædico, torrenti sanguine plenus ad ripas usque erumpes, undæque divinæ non solum polluentur sanguine, sed totæ rumpentur, et vivis multo major erit numerus sepultorum; superstes verò qui erit, lingua sola cognoscetur Ægyptius, actibus verò videbitur alienus. Quid fles, O Asclepi? Et his amplius, multoque deterius, ipsa Ægyptus suadebitur, imbueturque pejoribus malis, quæ sancta quondam et divinitatis amantissima deorum in terras religionis suæ merito, sola seductio [lege reductio] sanctitatis et pietatis magistra, erit maximæ crudelitatis exemplum. *Et tunc tædio hominum non admirandus videbitur mundus, neque adorandus. Hoc totum bonum, quo melius nec est, nec fuit, nec erit, quod videri possit, periclitabitur. Eritque grave hominibus, ac per hoc contemnetur, nec diligetur totus hic mundus, Dei opus immutabile, gloriosa constructio, bonum multiformi imaginum varietate compositum, machina voluntatis Dei in suo opere sine invidia suffragantis omnium in unum, quæ venerari, laudari, amari denique a videntibus possunt, multiformis adunata congestio.* Nam et tenebræ præponentur lumini, et mors vita utilior judicabitur. Nemo suspiciet cœlum. *Religiosus pro insano, irreligiosus putabitur prudens, furiosus fortis, pro bono habebitur pessimus.* Anima enim et omnia circum eam qui-

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purpose called in the assistance of the Barbarians, and erected a temple in the city, having previously

bus aut immortalis nata est, aut immortalitatem se consecuturam esse præsumit; secundum quod vobis exposui, non solum risus, sed etiam putabitur vanitas. *Sed mihi credite etiam periculum capitale constituetur in eum, qui se mentis religioni dederit. Nova constituentur jura, lex nova, nihil sanctum, nihil religiosum, nec cælo, nec cælestibus dignum audietur, aut mente credetur. Fiet Deorum ab hominibus dolenda secessio, soli nocentes angeli remanebant, qui humanitati commixti ad omnia audaciæ mala miseros manu injecta compellent in bella, in rapinas, in fraudes, et in omnia quæ sunt animarum naturæ contraria.* Tunc non terra constabit, nec navigabitur mare, nec cœlum astrorum cursibus, nec siderum cursus constabit in cœlo. Omnis vox divina necessaria taciturnitate mutescet, fructus terræ corrumpentur, nec fœcunda erit tellus, et aër ipse mœsto torpore languescet. Hæc et talis senectus veniet mundi, irreligio, inordinatio, irrationabilitas bonorum omnium. Cùm hæc cuncta contigerint, O Asclepi, tunc ille dominus et pater, Deus primipotens, et unus gubernator mundi, intuens in mores factaque voluntaria voluntate sua, quæ est Dei benignitas, vitiis resistens, et corruptelæ omnium errorem revocans, malignitatem omnem vel alluvione diluens, vel igne consumens, vel morbis pestilentiisque per diversa loca dispersis finiens, ad antiquam faciem mundum revocabit, ut et mundus ipse adorandus videatur et mirandus, et tanti operis effector et restitutor Deus ab omnibus qui tunc erunt frequentibus laudum præconiis benedictionibusque celebretur. Hæc enim mundi genitura cunctarum reformatio rerum bonarum, et naturæ ipsius sanctissima et religiosissima restitutio, peracto temporis cursu, quæ est et fuit sine initio sempiterna. Voluntas enim Dei caret initio, quæ eadem est, et ubique est sempiterna." i. e.

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subverted the laws of his country. When these things therefore came to pass, the stranger began

" Are you ignorant, O Asclepius, that Egypt is the image of heaven, or, which is more true, a translation and descent of every thing which is governed and exercised in heaven? And if it may be said, our land is truly the temple of the whole world. Nevertheless, because it becomes wise men to foreknow all things, it is not lawful you should be ignorant that the time will come when it may seem that the Egyptians have in vain, with a pious mind and sedulous religion, paid attention to divinity, and all their holy veneration shall become void and of no effect. For divinity shall return back from earth to heaven, Egypt shall be forsaken, and the land which was the seat of divinity, shall be destitute of religion, and deprived of the presence of the Gods. *For when strangers shall possess and fill this region and land, there shall not only be a neglect of religion, but, which is more miserable, there shall be laws enacted against religion, piety, and divine worship; they shall be prohibited, and punishments shall be inflicted on their votaries. Then this most holy land, the seat of places consecrated to divinity, and of temples, shall be full of sepulchres and dead bodies. O Egypt, Egypt, fables alone shall remain of thy religion, and these such as will be incredible to posterity, and words alone shall be left engraved in stones, narrating thy pious deeds. The Scythian, also, or Indian, or some other similar nation, shall inhabit Egypt.* For divinity shall return to heaven, all its inhabitants shall die, and thus Egypt, bereft both of God and man, shall be deserted. I call on thee, O most holy river, and predict to thee future events. Thou shalt burst forth with a torrent of blood, full even to thy banks, and thy divine waters shall not only be polluted with blood, but the land shall be inundated with it, and the number of the dead shall exceed that of the living. He likewise who survives, shall only by his language be known to be an Egyp-

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to think that this was the event which divinity had predicted. And perhaps, said he, I shall be a

tian, but by his deeds he will appear to be a stranger. Why do you weep, O Asclepius? Egypt shall experience more ample, and much worse evils than these, though she was once holy, and the greatest lover of the Gods on the earth, by the desert of her religion. And she who was alone the reductor of sanctity, and the mistress of piety, will be an example of the greatest cruelty. Then also, through the weariness of men, the world will not appear to be an admirable and adorable thing. This whole good, a better than which, as an object of perception, there neither is, nor was, nor will be, will be in danger, and will be grievous to men. Hence this whole world will be despised, and will not be beloved, though it is the immutable work of God, a glorious fabric, a good compounded with a multiform variety of images, a machine of the will of God, who in his work gave his suffrage without envy, that all things should be one. It is also a multiform collected heap, capable of being venerated, praised and loved by those that behold it. For darkness shall be preferred to light, and death shall be judged to be more useful than life. *No one shall look up to heaven. The religious man shall be accounted insane, the irreligious shall be thought wise, the furious brave, and the worst of men shall be considered a good man.* For the soul and all things about it, by which it is either naturally immortal, or conceives that it shall attain to immortality, conformably to what I have explained to you, shall not only be the subject of laughter, but shall be considered as vanity. *Believe me, likewise, that a capital punishment shall be appointed for him who applies himself to the religion of intellect. New statutes and new laws shall be established, and nothing religious or which is worthy of heaven, or celestial concerns, shall be heard, or believed by the mind. There will be a lamentable departure of*

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spectator of what will follow. He, likewise, then learnt some particulars about Osiris which would

the Gods from men,[1] *noxious angels*[2] *will alone remain, who being mingled with human nature will violently impel the miserable men [of that time] to war, to rapine, to fraud, and to every thing contrary to the nature of the soul.* Then the earth shall be in a preternatural state, the sea shall not be sailed in, nor shall the heavens accord with the course of the stars, nor the course of the stars continue in the heavens. *Every divine voice shall be dumb by a necessary silence,* the fruits of the earth shall be corrupted, nor shall the earth be prolific, and the air itself shall languish with a sorrowful torpor. These events and such an old age of the world as this shall take place, such irreligion, inordination, and unreasonableness of all good. When all these things shall happen, O Asclepius, then that lord and father, the God who is first in power, and the one governor of the world, looking into the manners and voluntary deeds [of men], and by his will which is the benignity of God, resisting vices, and recalling the error arising from the corruption of all things, washing away likewise all malignity, by a deluge, or consuming it by fire, or bringing it to an end by disease and pestilence dispersed in different places, will recall the

[1] Proclus finding that this was partially the case in his time, says prophetically in the Introduction to his MS. Commentary on the Parmenides of Plato, τουτον εγω φαιην αν τυπον φιλοσοφιας εις ανθρωπους ελθειν επ' ωφελεισι των τηδε ψυχων, αντι των αγαλματων, αντι των ιερων, αντι της ολης αγιστειας αυτης, και σωτηριας αρχηγον τοις γε νυν ουσιν ανθρωποις, και τοις εισαυθις γενησομενοις. i. e. "With respect to this form of philosophy [viz. of the philosophy of Plato], I should say that it came to men for the benefit of terrestrial souls; *that it might be instead of statues, instead of temples, instead of the whole of sacred institutions, and the leader of salvation both to the men that now are, and to those that shall exist hereafter.*"

[2] i. e. Evil dæmons.

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shortly happen, and others which would take place at some greater distance of time, viz. when the boy

world to its ancient form, in order that the world itself may appear to be an adorable and admirable production, and God the fabricator and restorer of so great a work, may be celebrated by all that shall then exist, with frequent solemn praises and benedictions. For this *geniture*[1] of the world, is the reformation of all good things, and the most holy and religious restitution of the nature of it, the course of time being accomplished;[2] since time is perpetual, and always was without a beginning. For the will of God is without beginning, is always the same, and is every where eternal."

Of this very remarkable extract, it is necessary to observe in the first place, that it was principally made by me from the edition of the Asclepian Dialogue, by Ficinus, as he appears to have had a more correct manuscript in his possession than any that have been consulted by more modern editors. Of this the learned, and at the same time philosophic, reader, will be immediately convinced, by comparing this extract with the same part of that dialogue in the most modern editions of it.

[1] By the *geniture* of the world, the greater *apocatastasis* is signified, as is evident from Julius Firmicus; which restoration of things to their pristine state is, according to that author, accomplished in the space of three hundred thousand years. This great period comprehends in itself, according to Petosyris and Necepso, six less periods, the last of which is under the dominion of Mercury, and abounds with improbity of every kind and inventions full of evil. "Quia nobile ingenium in homine," (says Firmicus) "unum vitæ cursum servare non potest, ex variis institutis moribusque confusis malitiæ crevit improbitas, et vitæ scelerum flagitia, gens hominum hoc tempore, facinorosis machinationibus, et invenit et tradidit. Hac ex causa, ultimum tempus Mercurio tradendum putaverunt, ut ad imitationem istius syderis, inventa plena malitia, gens hominum conciperet potestatem."

[2] i. e. A mundane period being finished.

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Horus would chuse as his associate in battle, a wolf instead of a lion. But who the wolf is, is a

In the second place, that this dialogue is of genuine antiquity and no forgery, is, I think, unquestionably evident from neither Lactantius nor Augustin having any doubt of its authenticity, though it was their interest to have proved it to be spurious if they could, because it predicts, which is the third thing especially deserving of remark, that the memorials of the martyrs should succeed in the place of the temples of the Gods. Hence Augustin concludes this to be a prophecy or prediction made *instinctu fallacis spiritûs, by the instinct or suggestion of a deceitful spirit.* But that this prediction was accomplished is evident, as Dr. Cudworth observes in his True Intellectual System of the Universe, p. 329. from the following passages of Theodoret, which I shall quote as translated by the Doctor. " Now the martyrs have utterly abolished and blotted out of the minds of men, the memory of those who were formerly called Gods." And again, " Our Lord hath now brought his dead (i. e. his martyrs) into the room and place (i. e. into the temples) of the Gods; whom he hath sent away empty, and bestowed their honour upon these his martyrs. For now, instead of the festivals of Jupiter and Bacchus, are celebrated those of Peter and Paul, Thomas and Sergius, and other holy martyrs." Antoninus, the philosopher, also, according to Eunapius, predicted the very same thing, viz. that after his decease, the magnificent temple of Serapis in Egypt, together with the rest, should be demolished, and the temples of the Gods be turned into sepulchres, *και τα ιερα ταφους γενησεσθαι.* And in the fourth and last place, the intelligent reader who compares this prediction with what is said about the philosophie stranger by Synesius in the foregoing extract will immediately see, that the former wonderfully accords with the latter.

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sacred narration, which it is not holy to divulge, even in the form of a fable."

Typhos, however, through his tyranny, was at length dethroned, and Osiris recalled from exile; and Synesius towards the end of this treatise observes, "that the blessed body which revolves in a circle, is the cause of the events in the sublunary world. For both are parts of the universe, and they have a certain relation to each other. If, therefore, the cause of generation [1] in the things which surround us, originates in the natures which are above us, it follows that the seeds of things which happen here descend from thence. And if some one should add, since astronomy imparts credibility to this, that there are *apocatastatic* [2] periods of the stars and spheres, some of which are simple but others compounded, such a one will partly accord with the Egyptians, and partly with the Grecians, and will be perfectly wise from both,

[1] Instead of *ει δη γενεσις εν τοις περι ημας, αιτια γενεσεως εν τοις υπερ ημας*, it is necessary to read conformably to the above translation, *ει δη γενεσεως εν τοις περι ημας, αιτια γινεται, κ. λ.*

[2] i. e. Restitutions to a pristine form or condition.

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conjoining intellect to science. A man of this kind, therefore, will not deny that in consequence of the same motions returning, effects also will return together with their causes; and that lives on the earth, generations, educations, dispositions and fortunes, will be the same with those that formerly existed. We must not wonder, therefore, if we behold a very ancient history verified in life, and should see things which flourished before our times, accord with what is unfolded in this narration; and besides this, perceive that the forms which are inserted in matter, are consentaneous to the arcana of a fable."

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